

DEPARTMENT OF STATE**[Public Notice No. 3240]****Bureau of Oceans, International Environmental and Scientific Affairs; Public Meeting To Discuss Preparations for Negotiations on an International Agreement Through the United Nations Environment Program on Persistent Organic Pollutants**

SUMMARY: The United States government, through an interagency working group chaired by the U.S. Department of State, is preparing for the fourth in a series of negotiations through the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) on a global agreement to address certain persistent organic pollutants (POPs) that result in risks of a transboundary nature. The fourth negotiating session is scheduled to take place in Bonn, Germany, on March 20–25, 2000. The Department of State will host a public meeting in advance of this session to outline issues likely to arise in the context of the negotiations. The public meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 14, 2000, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in Room 1408 of the U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street NW, Washington, D.C. To expedite their entrance into the building, attendees should provide to Eunice Mourning of the Office of Environmental Policy, U.S. Department of State (tel. 202–647–9266, fax 202–647–5947) their name, organization, date of birth and Social Security number by noon on Monday, February 13, 2000. Attendees should enter the C Street entrance and bring picture identification with them. For further information, please contact Ms. Cornelia Weierbach, U.S. Department of State, Office of Environmental Policy (OES/ENV), Room 4325, 2201 C Street NW, Washington DC 20520. Phone 202–647–4548, fax 202–647–5947, e-mail weierbachcm@state.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**The UNEP POPs Negotiations**

The POPs treaty is the first global treaty to address in a comprehensive manner the risks to human health and the environment of chemicals and other pollutants. The treaty will in the first instance deal with twelve substances: Aldrin, Endrin, HCBs, Toxaphene, Chlordane, Dieldrin, Heptachlor, Mirex, DDT, PCBs, dioxins and furans. These substances fall into three categories: pesticides, industrial chemicals, and unintended by-products of combustion and industrial processes.

These global negotiations are an ambitious undertaking, since they encompass a broad range of measures to

address POPs of transboundary concern. These range from controls on production and use for commercial chemicals, controls on POPs wastes, and controls on by-products that come from combustion and industrial processes. For many countries, this will be the first time that these substances have been controlled, and the effects are likely to be far-reaching.

Since the U.S. and other developed countries have already taken actions on these chemicals, major goals are broad participation in the agreement by developing countries and, consequently, meaningful reductions in the amount of pollutants that are released into the environment. A critical part of the agreement will be technical and financial assistance mechanisms to help developing countries effectively implement their obligations.

Timetable and Point of Contact

The POPs Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) expects to complete its work at its fifth session, which will take place in South Africa in fall 2000. In preparation for the fourth session of the INC, the Administration is preparing its position for the negotiation, and has scheduled a public meeting to be held on Tuesday, March 14, 2000 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in Room 1408 of the U.S. Department of State. Members of the interagency working group who will participate in the proposed negotiation will provide an overview of U.S. preparations for the fourth session. The U.S. Department of State is issuing this notice to help ensure that interested and potentially affected parties are aware of and knowledgeable about these negotiations, and have an opportunity to offer comments. Those organizations/individuals which cannot attend the March 14, 2000 meeting, but wish to either submit a written comment or to remain informed, should provide Eunice Mourning of the Office of Environmental Policy, U.S. Department of State (phone 202–647–9266; fax 202–647–5947) with their statement and/or their name, organization, address, telephone and fax numbers, and their e-mail address.

Dated: March 3, 2000.

Daniel Fantozzi,

*Director, Office of Environmental Policy,
Department of State.*

[FR Doc. 00–5647 Filed 3–8–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–06–U

DEPARTMENT OF STATE**Office of the Secretary****[Public Notice–3239]****Extension of the Restriction on the Use of United States Passports for Travel To, In or Through Iraq**

On February 1, 1991, pursuant to the authority of 22 U.S.C. 211a and Executive Order 11295 (31 FR 10603), and in accordance with 22 CFR 51.73(a)(2) and (a)(3), all United States passports, with certain exceptions, were declared invalid for travel to, in, or through Iraq unless specifically validated for such travel. The restriction was originally imposed because armed hostilities then were taking place in Iraq and Kuwait, and because there was an imminent danger to the safety of United States travelers to Iraq. American citizens then residing in Iraq and American professional reporters and journalists on assignment there were exempted from the restriction on the ground that such exemptions were in the national interest. The restriction has been extended for additional one-year periods since then, and was last extended through March 20, 2000, pursuant to your decision of March 18, 1999.

Conditions in Iraq remain hazardous for Americans. Iraq continues to refuse to comply with UN Security Council resolutions to fully declare and destroy its weapons of mass destruction and missiles while mounting a virulent public campaign in which the United States is blamed for maintenance of U.N. sanctions. The United Nations has withdrawn all U.S. citizen UN humanitarian workers from Iraq because of the Government of Iraq's stated inability to protect their safety. Since January 1999, Iraq has fired anti-aircraft artillery and surface-to-air missiles at U.S. and coalition aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq over 160 times, and has repeatedly illuminated U.S. and coalition aircraft with target-acquisition radar. In February 1999, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein offered a reward for the downing of an American or British aircraft or the capture of an American or British pilot.

Local conflicts within Iraq also pose hazards to travelers. The central government does not maintain control over all areas in the South and travel at night is particularly hazardous, given the potential for armed clashes between government forces and local resistance elements. Military repression of Shia communities continues in southern Iraq;